

**Sonnets 1, 35, and 75** by Edmund Spenser

**Sonnets 31 and 39** by Sir Philip Sidney

**Selection Test B**

**Critical Reading** *Identify the letter of the choice that best completes the statement or answers the question.*

- \_\_\_ 1. Which is the best paraphrase for the following lines from Sonnet 1?
- Those laming eyes will deign sometimes to look  
And read the sorrows of my dying spright  
Written with tears in heart's close bleeding book.
- A. Those eyes that look like large lamps sometimes look like blood and tears.  
B. Those eyes sometimes look and see my sad spirit, tearful and full of sorrow.  
C. Those eyes see my sorrowful nymph-like self, covering my books with blood and tears.  
D. Those lamps that are like eyes sometimes give the illusion that the book in the corner is covered with blood and tears.
- \_\_\_ 2. The message that the speaker of Sonnet 75 wishes to convey to his love is that
- A. he will love her for eternity.  
B. his verse will immortalize their love.  
C. the pleasure of love is worth its suffering.  
D. the pleasures of love must end with death.
- \_\_\_ 3. One way to identify the form of a Spenserian sonnet is by its
- A. unrhymed iambic pentameter.  
B. four beat line and *aabb* rhyme scheme.  
C. *abab bcbc cdcd ee* rhyme scheme.  
D. *ababbcbcc* rhyme scheme.
- \_\_\_ 4. How does a Spenserian sonnet differ from a Petrarchan sonnet?
- A. The Spenserian sonnet contains a different number of lines.  
B. Spenser's sonnets were written as part of a sequence.  
C. The Spenserian sonnet sometimes has no break between the octave and the sestet.  
D. The Spenserian sonnet deals with love and the natural world.
- \_\_\_ 5. The image of pages “. . . in love's soft bands, / Like captives trembling at the victor's sight” from Spenser's Sonnet 1 reinforces the theme that
- A. his poetry is not worthy of her.  
B. his beloved has won the argument between them.  
C. his beloved is cruel.  
D. like the pages, he too is a hopeless captive at the mercy of his beloved.
- \_\_\_ 6. The following lines come from Spenser's Sonnet 1:
- that angel's blessed look, / My soul's long lacked food, my heaven's bliss
- Restating these lines in simpler words is an example of
- A. recognizing historical context  
B. paraphrasing  
C. predicting  
D. recognizing speaker's situation

- \_\_\_ 7. The unifying theme of Sonnet 31 and Sonnet 39 is
- A. natural beauty.
  - B. hopeless love.
  - C. relief from pain.
  - D. endless suffering.
- \_\_\_ 8. Which of the following is a characteristic of Sidney's Sonnets 31 and 39?
- A. The speaker is engaged in an internal conflict.
  - B. A heavenly body stimulates the speaker's thoughts.
  - C. The speaker accepts that his love is lost.
  - D. The speaker sees Stella's image in his sleep.
- \_\_\_ 9. In Sonnet 31, Sidney uses the moon to
- A. explain life on earth.
  - B. reflect his own feelings.
  - C. emphasize his power.
  - D. symbolize all people.
- \_\_\_ 10. In the line "Is constant love deemed there but want of wit?" from Sonnet 31, Sidney is suggesting that
- A. true love leads to unhappiness.
  - B. no love can live forever.
  - C. love and intelligence are similar.
  - D. only fools can hope to find true love.
- \_\_\_ 11. Sidney's Sonnets 31 and 39 illustrate what characteristic of the sonnet sequence?
- A. The poet is scorned by his lover.
  - B. Relationships are presented in a true-to-life way.
  - C. The heavens are employed symbolically.
  - D. The ultimate outcome is left unresolved.
- \_\_\_ 12. Which of the following is the best paraphrase of these lines from Sidney's Sonnet 31?
- What, may it be that even in heavenly place / That busy archer his sharp arrows tries?
- A. Is it true that they practice archery in heaven?
  - B. What kind of sharp arrows fly in heaven?
  - C. Is it true that people fall in love in heaven?
  - D. Does an archer fix his arrows in heaven?
- \_\_\_ 13. In Sidney's Sonnet 39, the speaker asks sleep to "make in me those civil wars to cease." Which of the following best describes the "civil wars" the speaker suffers?
- A. the inner turmoil caused by love
  - B. the quarrel between the speaker and his beloved
  - C. the anger the speaker feels toward society
  - D. Stella's love for another man

## Vocabulary and Grammar

- \_\_\_ 14. The word *deign* means \_\_\_\_\_.  
 A. to lower oneself  
 B. to make plans  
 C. to govern  
 D. to heal
- \_\_\_ 15. Which phrase or sentence shows correct capitalization of a proper noun?  
 A. "With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies!"  
 B. "The Baiting place of wit, the balm of woe . . ."  
 C. "When Ye behold that angel's blessed look . . ."  
 D. "In their amazement like Narcissus Vain . . ."
- \_\_\_ 16. Which of the following is always a proper noun?  
 A. Helicon  
 B. Death  
 C. Love  
 D. Balm
- \_\_\_ 17. Which word or phrase is closest in meaning to the word *wan*?  
 A. wit  
 B. to grow weak  
 C. pale  
 D. soothing
- \_\_\_ 18. According to Sidney in Sonnet 39, sleep is a \_\_\_\_\_ for sorrow.  
 A. languor  
 B. balm  
 C. spright  
 D. deign

## Essay

19. The common practice in sonnet sequences of the time was to portray the beloved lady as extraordinarily beautiful but unreachable, while the lover was portrayed as remaining faithful to his beloved even though he endured an agony of love. Write an essay discussing these conventions in the sonnets you have read. How do Spenser and Sidney depict themselves in the different sonnets? How do they characterize their beloveds? Use specific examples that reflect these conventions.
20. The three sonnets from Spenser's sonnet sequence each describe some aspect of the speaker's love for his lady, but each focuses on a different aspect or expression of that love. Write an essay discussing these sonnets. What is the subject of each? What are the dominant images? What is the overall impression these three sonnets considered together convey about the speaker, his beloved, and their relationship?
21. Spenser and Sidney use a variety of images in their sonnets to convey the theme of hopeless and painful love. Choose two or three images from the sonnets, and write an essay explaining how each image contributes to this theme. For example, in Sonnet 39 Sidney uses the image of "fierce darts" thrown by Despair to describe the pain the lover feels.